

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - P A R A 8 (#8 PREVIOUSLY OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: FIRST DAYS OF PLOVDIV FAIR

REF: SOFIA 1174

1. SUMMARY: PARTY CHIEF TODOR ZHIVKOV BROKE PAST PATTERN AND CHOSE TO LINGER IN US PAVILION WHERE HE LOUDLY CRITICIZED EXHIBIT AS PROPAGANDA AND SAID THAT TIME HAD COME FOR DISPLAY OF US COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL GOODS AT PLOVDIV FAIR. IN CONTRAST, BULGARIAN PERFORMANCE AT AMERICA DAY RECEPTION FOLLOWING DAY WAS CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY, PROBABLY ON ORDERS TO COUNTER ANY FEELINGS OF ILL WILL GENERATED BY ZHIVKOV'S THEATRICALS. END SUMMARY.

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2. TODOR ZHIVKOV WITH LARGE PARTY (INCLUDING IVAN

ABADZIEV AND VENELIN KOTSEV) ARRIVED AT US PAVILION AFTER 2PM (WALK THROUGH FAIR GROUNDS HAVING BEGUN AT 10AM). ZHIVKOV WELCOMED BY CHARGE, CONGRESSMAN AND MRS. CEDERBERG, PAVILION DIRECTOR NIGLIS AND MR. SHIRLEY, USIA ASSISTANT DIRECTOR IEE. CONGRESSMAN CEDERBERG ESCORTED HIM AROUND DISPLAY.

3. UNLIKE PREVIOUS YEARS WHEN HE GAVE CURSORY WALK THROUGH, ZHIVKOV STOPPED TWICE. AT LINCOLN CONTINENTAL (WHICH HE ALMOST SAT IN) HE IDENTIFIED MAKE AND SAID TO ONE OF ENTOURAGE "WE SHOULD BUY IT", PROBABLY GOOD HUMORED REMARK WITH BREZHNEV'S LINCOLN IN MIND. AT MOBIL GAS STATION GREASE LIFT HE REMARKED IN MORE SERIOUS VEIN, "WE SHOULD BUY IT FOR OUR TRUCKS", EVEN THOUGH IT IS DESIGNED FOR PASSENGER VEHICLES.

4. AS PARTY MOVED TO GAS PUMP DISPLAY (NEXT TO LAST IN EXHIBIT) ZHIVKOV STOPPED AND DEMANDED TO SPEAK TO EXHIBIT DIRECTOR. NIGLIS STEPPED FORWARD TO BE MET BY LOUD TIRADE CLEARLY DESIGNED TO IMPRESS ZHIVKOV'S COLLEAGUES. ZHIVKOV SHOUTED "TIME HAS PASSED FOR PROPAGANDA DISPLAY AND BEGIN REAL TRADE. BRING YOUR MACHINERY, BRING YOUR TECHNICIANS. WHOEVER TOLD YOU THAT A DISPLAY LIKE THIS MAKES AN IMPRESSION IS WRONG. IF YOU WANT OUR TECHNICIANS TO COME AND SEE YOUR PAVILION, SHOW MACHINERY. WHAT YOU HAVE HERE IS UNINTERESTING."

5. UPON CHARGE' INSISTENCE TO BE ALLOWED TO RESPOND, ZHIVKOV HALTED. SHE TOLD HIM WHEN BULGARIA IS PREPARED TO BUY US INDUSTRIALEQUIPMENT, WE ARE PREPARED TO SELL IT. WITHOUT REPLYING, ZHIVKOV AGAIN SHOUTED HIS DEMAND FOR DISPLAY OF INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT, NOT PROPAGANDA. HE WAS THEN INVITED TO SEE COMMERCE BDO DISPLAY BUT DECLINED ON GROUNDS HE WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT. FOLLOWING BRIEF GOODBYES, HE AND ENTOURAGE DEPARTED.

6. ZHIVKOV HAS VISITED US PAVILION IN PREVIOUS YEARS, BUT THIS IS FIRST TIME, SO FAR AS WE AWARE, THAT HE HAS LINGERED LONG ENOUGH FOR DISCUSSION, ALBEIT A DEMAND FOR MORE COMMERCIAL DISPLAY, HIS ACCUSATION THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXHIBIT IS PROPAGANDA IS NOT NEW LINE FROM GOB OFFICIALS, BUT PUBLIC OUTBURST FROM CHARIMAN OF STATE COUNCIL IS UNPRECEDENTED.

IT WAS CLEAR FROM TONE OF VOICE , HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS SPEAKING TO IMPRESS ENTOURAGE AND TO HAVE THEM WITNESS HER PERSONAL CHASTISEMENT OF AMERICANS TO STOP PROPAGANDA AND BEGIN SERIOUS BUSINESS. SUCH THEATRICALS ARE TYPICAL FOR ZHIVKOV AND AS ONE HIGH RANKING OFFICIAL LATER

REMARKED, "YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER HIS PEASANT BACK-GROUND".

7. NO DOUBT IN EFFORT TO SMOOTH ANY FEATHERS RUFFLED BY ZHIVKOV PERFORMANCE PREVIOUS DAY, AMERICA DAY RECEPTION TOOK PLACE IN ATMOSPHERE OF CORDIALITY AND GOOD WILL. LARGE BOUQUET OF FLOWERS FROM MINISTER FOREIGN TRADE TIPPED US OFF THAT RED CARPET TREATMENT WOULD BE GIVEN US AND INDEED LAST MINUTE ARRIVAL OF DEPUTY PREVIER (AND POLITBURO MEMBER) IVAN POPOV AT RECEPTION ALTERED SCENARIO. DEPUTY FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER LUKANOV YIELDED HIS PLACE TO POPOV AT LAST MINUTE TO RESPOND TO CONGRESSMAN CEDERBERG'S WELCOMING REMARKS. POPOV SAID THAT HE AGREED WITH SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED ON NEED TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS AND NOTED THAT US PARTICIPATION PLOVDIV FAIR TOOK ON ADEED SIGNIFICANCE THIS YEAR IN PERIOD OF EAST-WEST COOPERATION. FOR ITS PART, HE SAID, GOB HAD MADE DECISION TO TAKE CONCRETE STEPS IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH NON-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES IN GENERAL, AND WITH US SPECIFICALLY. IN POLITE SUPPORT OF HIS BOSS, HE SAID, HE WOULD REPEAT MR. ZHIVKOV'S COMMENT ON OPENING DAY, THAT NEXT YEAR HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE OF WHAT THE UNITED STATES PRODUCES THAT IS OF GREATER INTEREST TO THE BULGARIAN ECONOMY.

8. IN ADDITION TO POPOV AND LUKANOV, FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAYKOV INTERRUPTED VACATION TO ATTEND AND OFFICIAL GOB REPRESENTATION AS HIGHEST IN OUR MEMORY.

9. IN ITSELF MINOR, FOLLOWING INCIDENT TYPIFIED ATMOSPHERE OF AMERICA DAY CEREMONIES. MRS. CEDERBERG MENTIONED TO POPOV ART EXHIBIT SHE HAD LIKED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN PLOVDIV. POPOV CASUALLY ASKED WHERE GALLERY WAS LOCATED AND SOME MINUTES LATER FAIR AUTHORITIES ARRIVED WITH LITHOGRAPH SHE HAD ADMIRER AS GIFT FOR US GUEST OF HONOR.

10. MEDIA COVERAGE OF AMERICA DAY CONSIDERABLY BEEFED UP FROM PREVIOUS YEARS, WITH ARTICLES IN ALL CENTRAL DAILIES, AS WELL AS ITEM ON EVENING TV NEWS.

11. COMMENT: NEWS OF ZHIVKOV OUTBURST QUICKLY SPREAD AND SEEMED TO HAVE EMBARRASSED BULGARIAN OFFICIALS SLIGHTLY. LUKANOV, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT HE HAD BEEN ROUSTED OUT OF BED NIGHT BEFORE BY VENELIN KOTSEV WHO HAD DESCRIBED INCIDENT. CLEAR IMPLICATION WAS THAT LUKANOV AND OTHERS HAD

BEEN TOLD TO "COOL IT" AND MAKE SURE WE WERE NOT
OFFENDED BY DIRECTNESS OF ZHIVKOV APPROACH. MAYOR
OF PLOVDIV AND CHAIRMAN BULGARIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
WENT SO FAR AS TO APOLOZIZE TO CHARGE AND EMBOFFS
ALTHOUGH BOTH CAREFULLY SAID THEY AGREED WITH SUB-
STANCE ZHIVKOV CRITICISM IF NOT HIS METHOD OF ATTACK.
IN ANY EVENT INCIDENT DID MUCH TO BOOST AMERICA DAY
ACTIVITIES AND WILL PROBABLY FILTER DOWN TO MAN ON THE
STREET IN FASHION TO INCREASE HIS DESIRE TO SEE OUR
EXHIBIT. AFTER ALL ANYTHING ZHIVKOV CRITICIZES CAN'T
BE ALL BAD.
BATJER

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